

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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R 181323Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4835

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 442

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LT

SUBJECT: TREASON TRIAL: GOL INQUIRY RE LAWYER'S COMMITTEE

REF: STATE 261566, NOV 29, 74

1. OFFICER OF INTELLIGENCE BRANCH OF GOL POLICE HAS CALLED AT EMBASSY TO ASK FOR ANY INFORMATION EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE REGARDING FUNDING OF DEFENSE IN TREASON TRIALS. OFFICER EXPLAINED THAT GOL WAS AWARE, OF COURSE, THAT DEFENSE FUND HAD BEEN RAISED BY LESOTHO CHRISTIAN COUNCIL BUT WAS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT SOME OF MONEY MIGHT BE COMING FROM UNDESIRABLE SOURCES AND MIGHT BE INTENDED FOR OTHER THAN LEGAL DEFENSE USES. HE ASKED ESPECIALLY WHETHER EMBASSY KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT LAWYERS' COMMITTEE.

2. EMBASSY EXPLAINED THAT WE HAD NO DIRECT INFORMATION AS TO WHAT ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT BE CONTRIBUTING TO DEFENSE FUND, BUT THAT IF LAWYERS' COMMITTEE WAS CONTRIBUTING, GOL COULD BE ASSURED IT WAS FOR PURELY HUMANITARIAN, NON-POLITICAL REASONS. EXPLAINED THAT LAWYERS' COMMITTEE WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED ORGANIZATION OF
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UNIMPEACHABLE REPUTATION WHICH SOMETIMES CONTRIBUTED TO LEGAL

DEFENSE FUNDS TO INSURE THAT INDIGENT ACCUSED COULD AFFORD
PROPER DEFENSE.

3. EMBASSY DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER LAWYERS' COMMITTEE'S PRACTICE
IS EVER TO ADVISE GOVERNMENTS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEGAL DEFENSE
FUNDS IN THEIR TERRITORIES. IF SO, COMMITTEE MIGHT WISH TO
ADVISE LESOTHO EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON OF ITS CONTRIBUTION TO
DEFENSE IN TREASON TRIALS. ALTERNATIVELY, EMBASSY MASERU, WITH
DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL, WOULD BE WILLING PASS INFORMATION BACK
TO GOL. EITHER MEANS WOULD BE USEFUL IN ALLAYING ANY GOL SUS-
PICIONS OF COMMITTEE'S MOTIVES. EMBASSY WILL ADHERE TO
EXPLANATION PARA 2 ABOVE PENDING ADVICE FROM DEPT.
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